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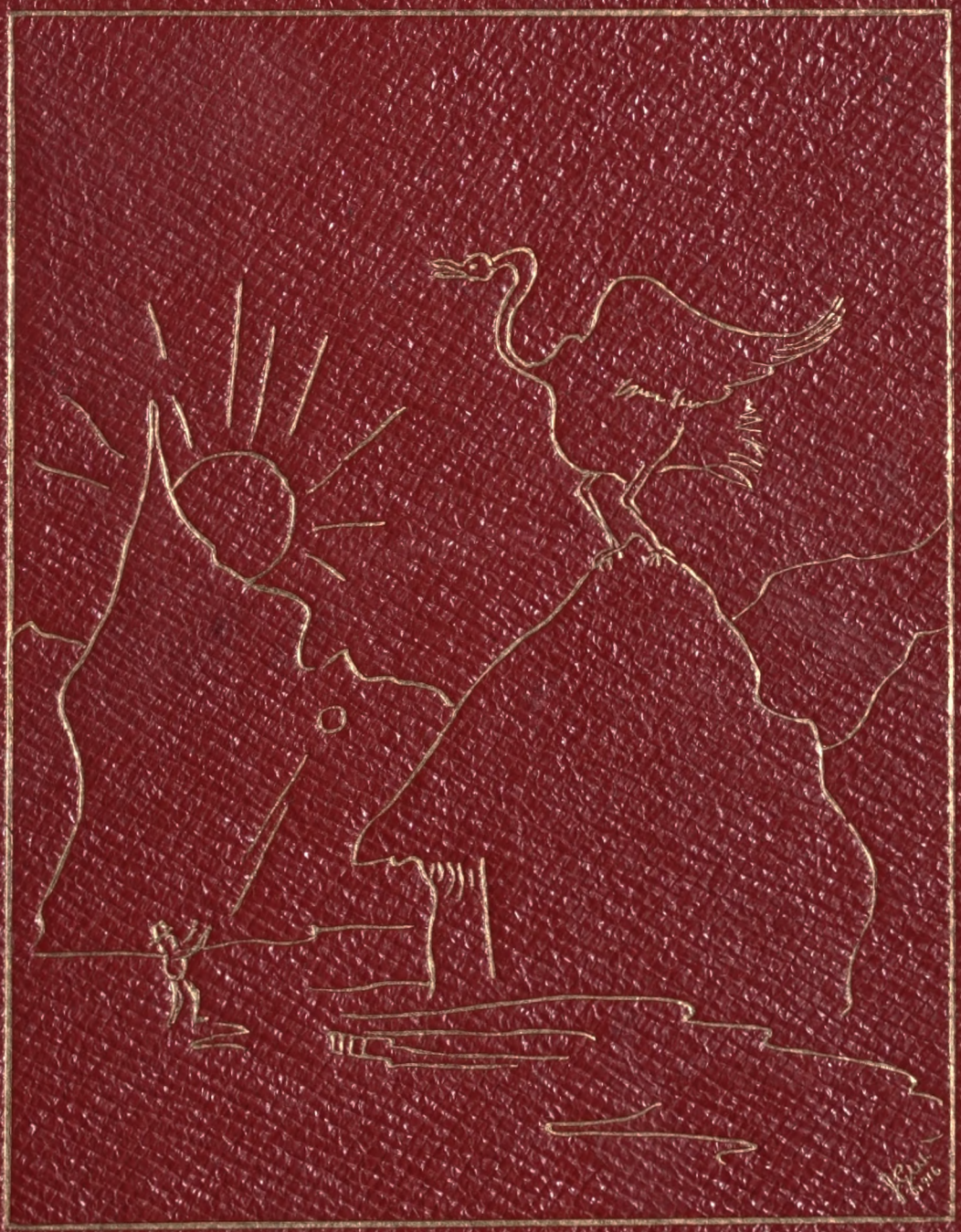
Whipperwhoppers

By Josephine Grant Wheeler



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Josephine Grant Wheeler

THE WHIPPER-WHOPPERS

STORIES AND DRAWINGS

BY

JOSEPHINE GRANT WHEELER

The Knickerbocker Press
NEW YORK
1918

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BY
HENRY O. WHEELER, Jr.

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Dedicated

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD

A. E. F., FRANCE,
November 30, 1918.

TO THE READER:

There are those rare lives that absorb, live, and radiate only the beautiful. And the beautiful radiated from the life of one of these, the "very elect," lives on after the earthly career is ended, leaving the imprint of its beauty on all beings and things that have come into contact with that life.

Such was the life of the writer of these stories, Josephine Grant Wheeler. And the memory of her life, in all its richness, sweetness, and beauty, lives on to-day, though to mortal vision her life seemed to vanish two years before the date of this "Foreword."

In 1906 there was published in *St. Nicholas*, "Father's Whaling Voyage," which the pub-

lishers of *St. Nicholas* have courteously given permission to republish in this little volume. For this courtesy we extend to the Century Company our hearty appreciation and thanks.

"Father's Adventure with the Balloon Fish" with the author's own drawings illustrating it, was completed just a little time before the final summons came to the author, and it is here published for the first time.

A husband who loved the author of these stories beyond measure desires particularly to present this little volume to some of those children—some young and some of older growth—that the author loved.

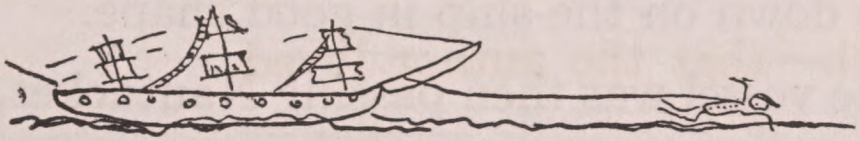
HENRY O. WHEELER, JR.

FATHER'S WHALING VOYAGE

(*As told and illustrated by Father. N. B.: Father is a whaler, not an artist.*)

FATHER went to New Bedford in 1854. He shipped on a vessel which was to start the next morning to catch whales.

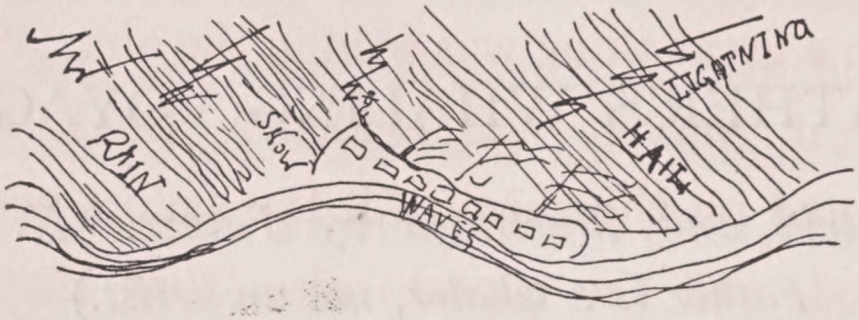
The next morning the ship started. There was hardly any wind. The captain said the



ship went too slow, so he tied a rope around Father and fastened the other end to the ship, and made Father get out in the water and swim and pull on the rope.

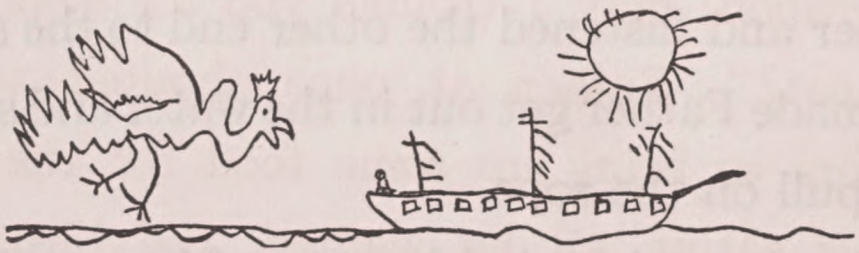
Very soon the wind began to blow, and the ship sailed faster and faster. Father was afraid the ship would run over him and rub the skin off his back, so he made a dive, and the

ship sailed over him without doing him any harm. He came to the top of the water be-



hind the ship. But by this time she was going so very fast that when the rope became tight it gave such a tremendous and sudden jerk that it yanked my Father clear out of the water and sent him flying through the air, and he came down on the ship in good shape.

The vessel was then passing Nantucket, and very soon entered the Gulf Stream, when a big



storm came on. For fourteen days the ship was at the mercy of the storm, driven to and fro by the winds and tossed up and down by

the waves. They were all afraid except my brave Father.

At ten minutes past one o'clock in the afternoon a great thing was seen in the air. Whatever it was, it was evidently tired, for it alighted on the ship. All the sailors were so scared, and the captain also, that they ran down below, leaving my Father alone on deck with the great bird. The bird noticed that my father looked surprised, and my father's as-

tonishment was greatly increased upon hearing the bird speak. The bird said, "Good afternoon; may I trouble you for something to eat?" Father at once shouted to the sailors to bring up some food for the bird. After eating all he wanted, the bird said, "Thank you; can I be of any service to you?"

My Father had confidence in the bird, be-

cause he was so polite, showing he had been well brought up, and the bird loved my Father because he was not afraid and had fed him; so

the bird was told all about the trip, and how they were after whales, and how the storm had blown them far from their course.

My Father then asked the bird what his name was and where he came from. He said he was of the family of Whipper-whoppers from the South Pole. He offered, if my Father would ride on his back, to go and bring assistance.

My Father at once accepted this kind offer, and got up on the Whipper-whopper's back.

On the morning of the third day they arrived at the South Pole. Notice was sent for all the Whipper-whoppers to meet together. They came the next day—more than two

hundred of them. They consulted together how they could help my Father. It was de-

cided to send a relief expedition composed of twenty Whipper-whoppers, each one of them to be accompanied by a Whang-doodle. The

Whang-doodles acted as body-servants to the Whipper-whoppers, waiting upon them and helping them in various ways.

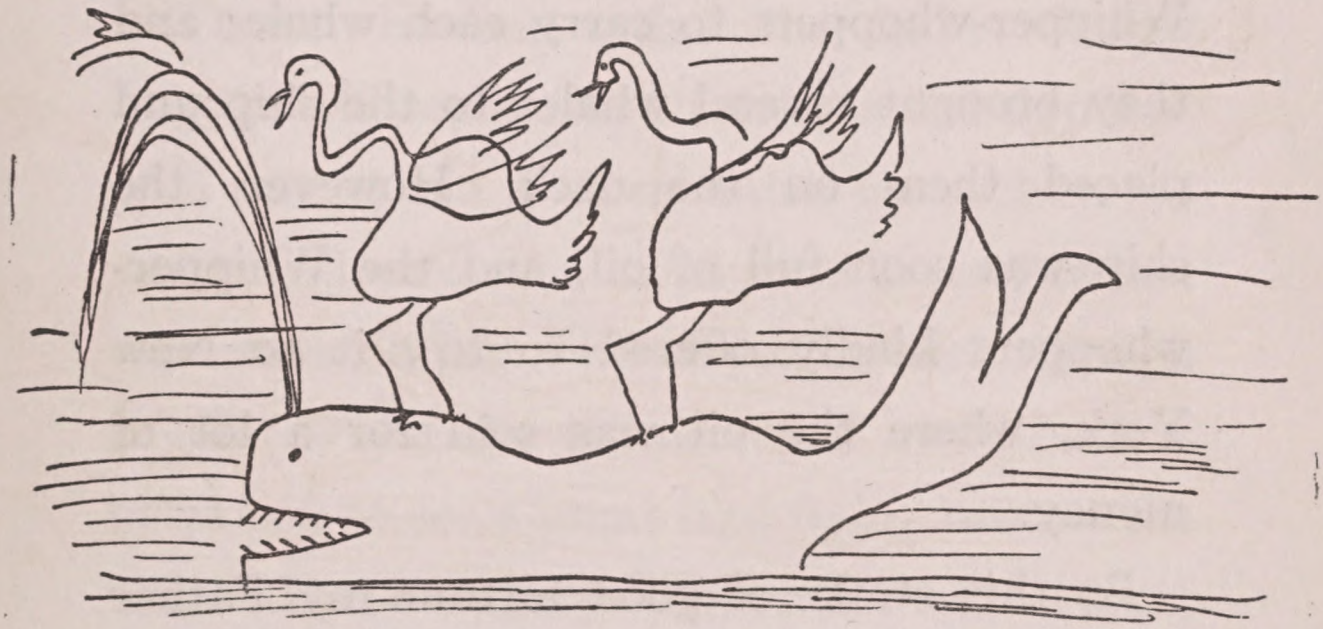
Each of the Whipper-whoppers carried on his back a Whang-doodle. The Whipper-

whopper which led the procession carried my Father. About noon of the second day the ship was discovered, and all the Whipper-whoppers gathered around it. None of the sailors could be seen, and the ship looked as

if it was deserted. The Whipper-whopper on which was my Father swam near the ship and stretched out his neck, forming a bridge over which my Father passed in safety to the ship. He found the sailors hid in empty oil-barrels. They came out when they heard my Father's voice.

It seems that the sight of the Whang-doodles had scared them. My Father reassured them

and they followed him up on the deck. Now they all had a big talk as to what was the best thing to be done next. The Whipper-whoppers and some of the Whang-doodles were opposed to helping any one on the ship except my Father. It was finally settled that they would



help fill the barrels with oil if my Father could have half of it.

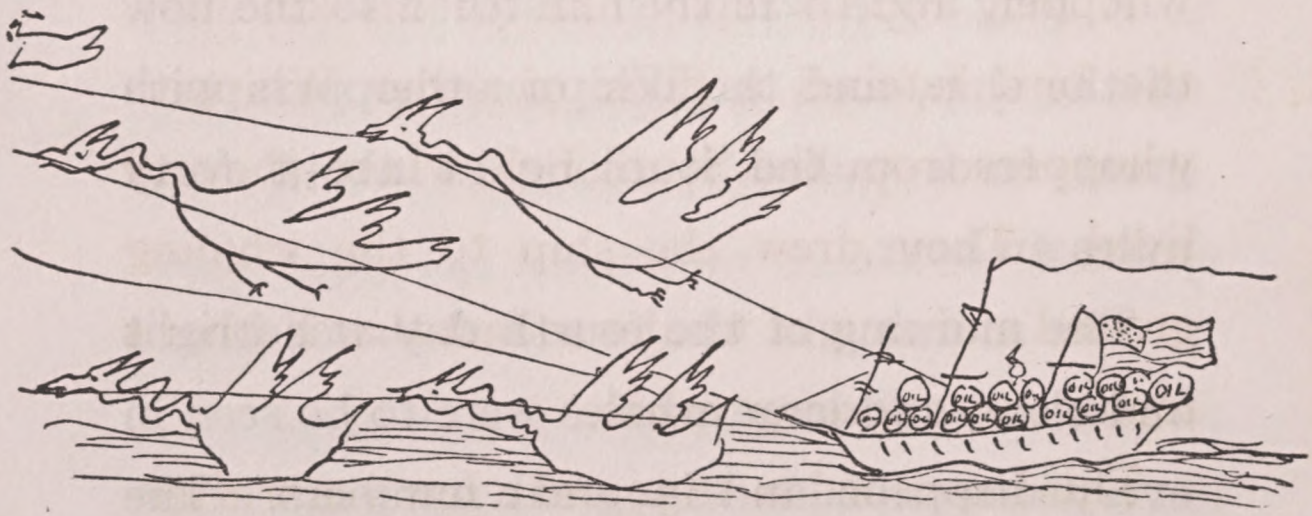
A long rope was then fastened to the bow of the ship, and the Whipper-whoppers with great force pulled it along at about forty miles an hour.

The morning of the fourth day was bright and clear, and large whales were to be seen in every direction and in great numbers. The

Whipper-whoppers, knowing that what my Father wanted was whales, commenced at once to catch them. It was a very exciting scene,—one which my Father has often described to us.

As his illustration shows, it took two Whipper-whoppers to carry each whale; and they brought several whales to the ship and placed them on the deck. However, the ship was soon full of oil, and the Whipper-whoppers kindly offered to tow it to New York, where the oil was sold for a lot of money.

By this stroke of good fortune my Father gained sufficient wealth to enable him to retire from the whaling business.



FATHER'S ADVENTURE WITH THE BALLOON FISH

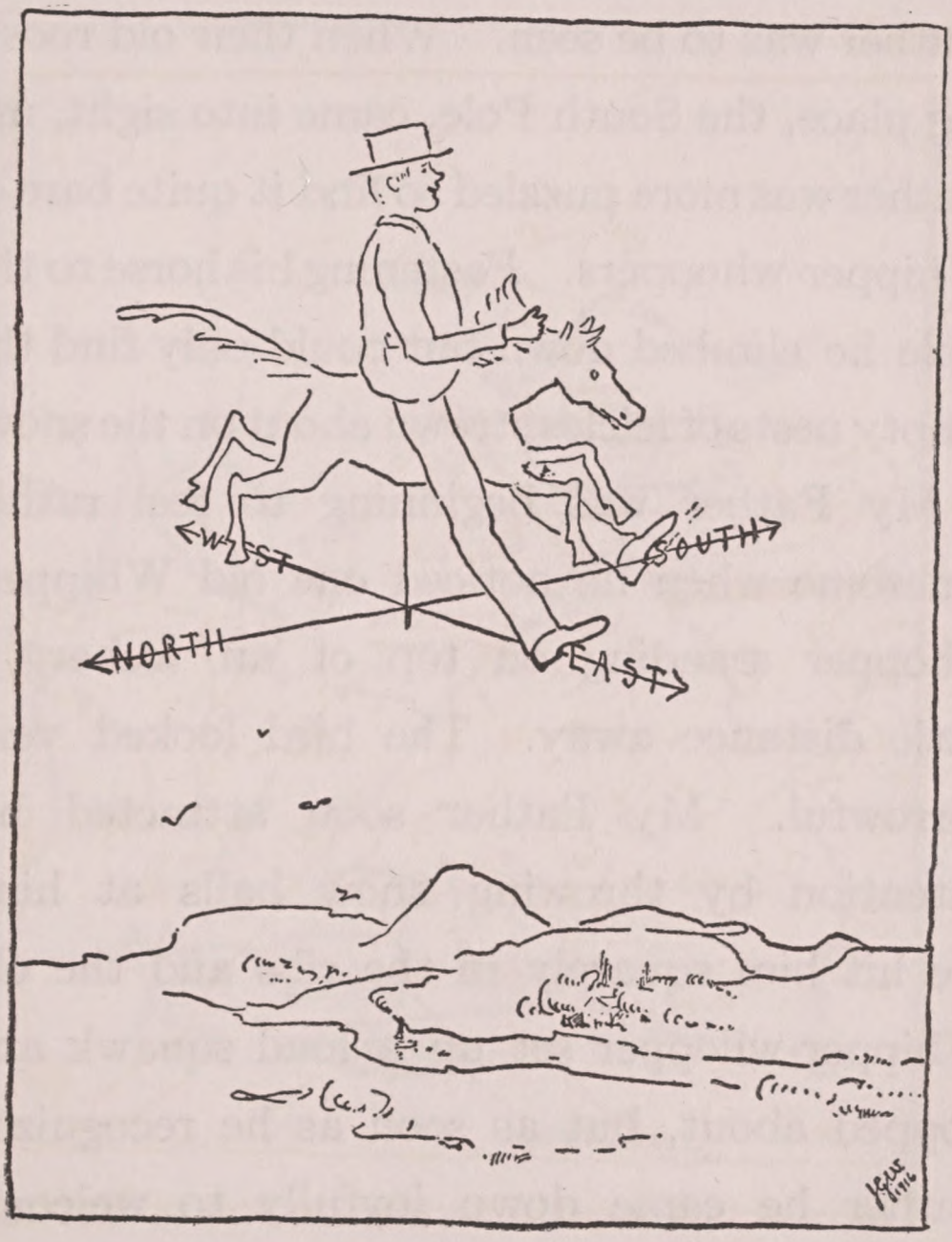
THOSE who went with Father on his whaling voyage will remember that when the ship was well out at sea a storm came up such as no sailor had ever seen. All went below, except my brave Father, who stayed on deck through it all. When the clouds rolled away he was surprised to see a great bird flying toward the ship. The Whipper-whopper (for such it was) alighted on one of the masts and asked Father for something to eat. Father fed the Whipper-whopper, and to repay him for his kindness, the bird fetched a flock of other Whipper-whoppers from the South Pole where they all lived. They drew the ship to the whaling ground and caught whales so fast that Father's fortune was forever made.

This happened in 1854 and a few years after-

ward Father thought he would go down to the South Pole to see his old Whipper-whopper friends.

There was a weather-vane on top of Father's barn in the shape of a tin horse, which could always be seen going lickety-split in whatever direction the wind was blowing. My Father thought that if any horse knew North from South this one would, and one

evening he unscrewed the weather-vane and straddled the horse.



"Get along with you!" cried my Father, which appeared to astonish the horse, but he got along at a great pace through the air straight toward the South Pole.

They came in sight of the big icebergs the

next morning, and Father kept on the lookout for Whipper-whoppers, but not so much as a feather was to be seen. When their old roosting place, the South Pole, came into sight, my Father was more puzzled to find it quite bare of Whipper-whoppers. Fastening his horse to the Pole he climbed down but could only find the empty nests of icicles strewn about on the snow.

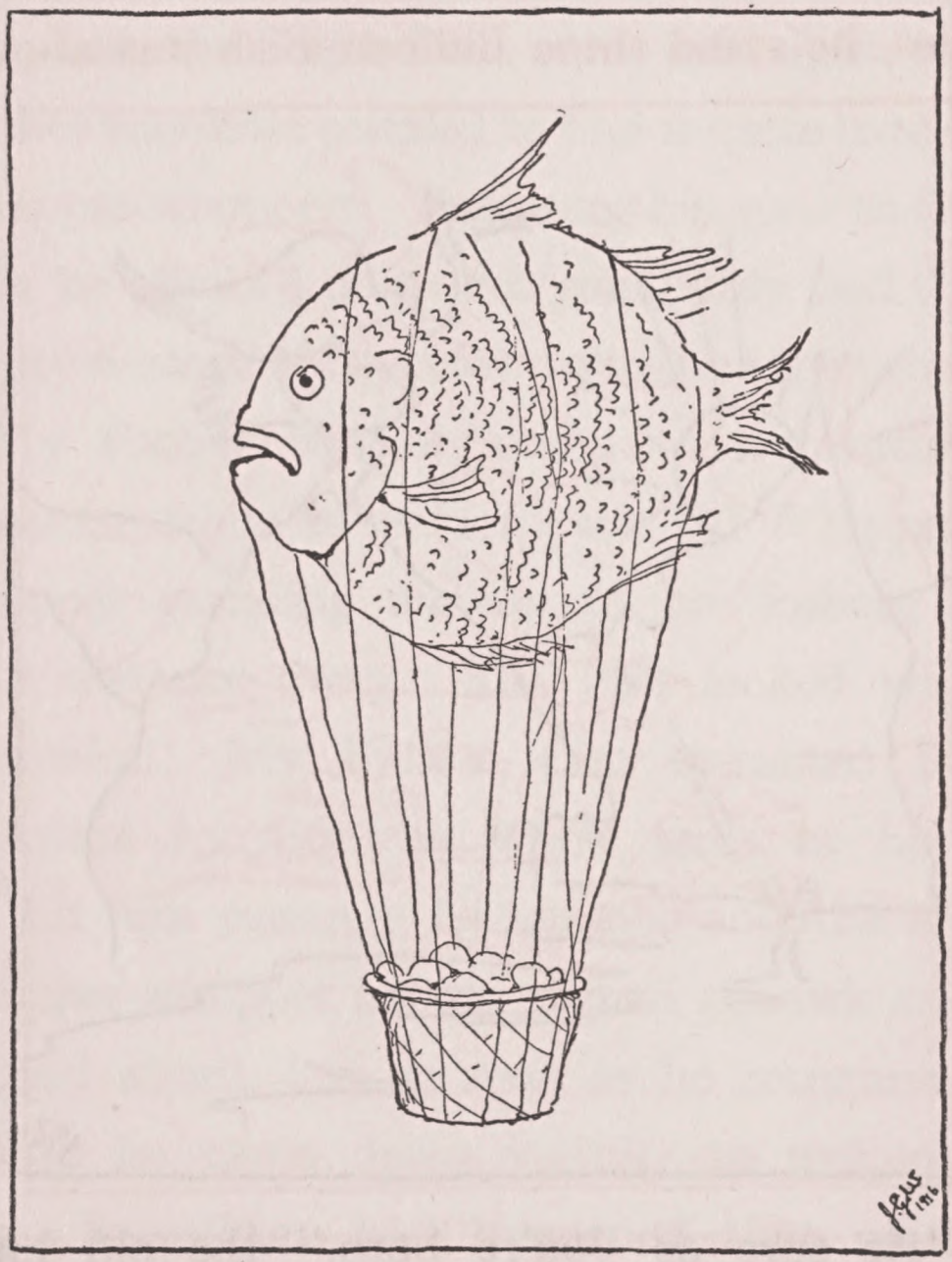
My Father was beginning to feel rather lonesome when he noticed one old Whipper-whopper standing on top of an iceberg a little distance away. The bird looked very sorrowful. My Father soon attracted his attention by throwing snow balls at him. He hit him squarely in the ribs and the old Whipper-whopper set up a loud squawk and flopped about, but as soon as he recognized Father he came down joyfully to welcome him. Something had happened that made him feel pretty blue. All the other Whipper-whoppers had left him that morning to shift for himself and look after the nests. So he had settled himself for a good nap and when he

woke there was not a Whipper-whopper egg to be seen.

"As sure as you're born," the old bird croaked, "those Balloon Fish have carried them off!"

Father found that these Balloon Fish had a weakness for Whipper-whopper eggs and that

instead of swimming in the ocean as all good fish are supposed to do, they floated like balloons through the sky.



My Father told the old Whipper-whopper to brace up, and he would see what could be done. It did not take long for Father to climb on his horse and he was soon out of

the old bird's sight, so he settled down again to finish his nap.

When Father had gone straight up a few miles, he spied these Balloon Fish just above

making off with the Whipper-whopper eggs as fast as they could go. But of course, they could not get ahead of my Father. They swooped down ready to swallow him, but the sharp arrows of the weather-vane gave each

one a good prick when it came near. Every-time there was a popping sound, and before long all the fish were dropping to the earth.

They went down so slowly that not a Whipper-whopper egg was so much as cracked, but as for the Balloon Fish, there did not seem to be any left to speak of.

My Father woke the old Whipper-whopper, who was so surprised to find the eggs all safe

again that he lost his balance and slid all the way down from the top of the iceberg.

The rest of the Whipper-whoppers soon came back, and my kind Father could not be thanked enough. He told them he was well repaid if the eggs all hatched out good honest Whipper-whoppers. Next day he mounted his faithful horse and rode off amid the cheers of all the grateful Whipper-whoppers.

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